Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Technology Transitions Policy	)	GN Docket No. 13-5
Task Force Seeks Comment on	)	
Potential Trials	)	

COMMENTS OF SPRINT NEXTEL CORPORATION

Sprint Nextel Corporation ("Sprint") hereby respectfully submits its comments in the above-captioned docket. The Commission should reject AT&T's and NTCA's proposal to conduct trials on Internet Protocol interconnection ("IP interconnection"), as such trials are unnecessary. Instead, the Commission should complete the pending Intercarrier Compensation Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking[1] and immediately mandate the industry transition to the exchange of voice traffic in IP format. With respect to proposals that the Commission facilitate trials of Next Generation 9-1-1 ("NG911") service, Sprint supports trials of NG911 technology, but there are a number of important unresolved issues the Commission should address prior to moving forward with these proposals.

[1] *Connect America Fund, et al., Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, FCC 11-161, WC Docket No. 10-90, 26 FCC Rcd. 17663 (2011) ("*ICC/USF Transformation Order and FNPRM*").

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I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

An IP interconnection trial is not needed. The industry as a whole already successfully exchanges voice traffic in IP format. Sprint does so with numerous other competitive carriers and is fully prepared to exchange voice traffic in IP format with the RBOCs if they were willing to interconnect on a just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory basis. Even as they balk at entering into IP voice interconnection agreements with unaffiliated carriers, Verizon and AT&T exchange voice traffic in IP format with their own affiliates.[2] What the Commission must do now is what Sprint has already encouraged it to do—compel the nation's largest incumbent carriers to establish interconnection agreements and begin exchanging voice traffic in IP format with competing carriers.

The Commission has already made clear that the interconnection obligations in 47 U.S.C. §§ 251 and 252 apply regardless of the technology used to effect interconnection. Further, the Commission made clear its expectation that carriers establish interconnection arrangements using IP during the intercarrier compensation reform transition. In fact, the Commission's expectation of implementation of such interconnections was not prefaced on the conducting, or completion, of an industry trial because the Commission understood that carriers are fully capable of exchanging traffic in IP format. Rather, the trial concept arose *after* the Commission affirmed that IP-based interconnection is subject

[2] Verizon's recent offer to negotiate an IP interconnection agreement, an apparent reaction to the Massachusetts IP proceeding, is predicated on competing carriers agreeing to a strictly "commercial" agreement and thereby relinquishing statutory rights and regulatory recourse. Given Verizon's superior bargaining position, there is little hope that Verizon will treat competitors as co-carriers in any such negotiations nor that the terms of any resulting interconnection agreement would be just, reasonable, nondiscriminatory, and pro-competitive. The Commission should discount any claims that Verizon's overture is made in good faith or that resulting terms of any negotiations will promote competition until and unless Verizon agrees to make its terms available for Commission review and approval.

to Sections 251 and 252 and *after* the Commission stated its expectation that carriers would begin exchanging traffic in IP format.

The endorsement of a trial arose from parties that stand to gain the most from delaying or denying the establishment of efficient, pro-competition interconnections. While the other proposed trials (NG911, all-IP, wireless-only) are warranted because they involve unproven approaches for service delivery to consumers, a trial of an already established intercarrier traffic hand-off practice is both unnecessary and a source of further delay. The benefits of lower cost interconnection and availability of expanded IP-based services should not be kept on hold any longer. If ILECs continue to refuse to negotiate in good faith and establish IP-based interconnections, the Commission and state regulators must step in to enforce this requirement and to help resolve the associated disputes.

There are a number of unresolved issues that the Commission should address and consider before moving forward with trials related to NG911 service. Standards bodies have not yet completed their work on NG911 standards, and standards work must be closer to completion before the Commission contemplates NG911 trials. In addition, there has been no discussion of how NG911 trials or long-term NG911 deployment will be funded. It is also important that the Commission consider several possible scenarios for NG911 trials in addition to the trial scenario discussed in the Public Notice. Finally, the Commission should consider participation in any proposed NG911 trials by interested carriers with varying capabilities for delivering calls to a NG911 platform.

II. VOICE IP INTERCONNECTION TRIALS ARE UNNECESSARY

Much of the telecommunications industry already exchanges voice traffic in IP format. Even AT&T, which has proposed the trials, exchanges voice traffic in IP format among its affiliates.[3] Verizon, likewise, has experience exchanging voice traffic in IP format with its affiliates and others.[4] Many other smaller carriers are ahead of AT&T and Verizon in their transitions to IP.[5] The proposed trials thus are duplicative of the knowledge and experience the industry has already compiled and will only result in costly delays in deploying all-IP networks. What the industry and the public need now is forceful Commission action so that carriers ready to exchange voice traffic in IP format, such as Sprint, can do so with other carriers that are equipped to do so but are delaying for anticompetitive or other reasons.

Because Sprint does not believe trials are even necessary, Sprint takes no position on many of the detailed issues that the Commission would need to decide to initiate such trials. Nevertheless, Sprint does have several general comments on the proposed IP interconnection trials.

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[3] Direct testimony of Carl C. Albright, Jr. on behalf of AT&T Illinois, ICC Docket No. 12-0550, at 9, lines 218, 225-226 (Dec. 5, 2012), *available at* www.icc.illinois.gov/downloads/public/edocket/340966.pdf, (AT&T ILECs and their affiliate that performs IP/TDM conversions for the ILECs, AT&T Corp., "have a connection of sorts" but AT&T denies it is "IP interconnection in the section 251(c)(2) sense of that word".) Contrary to *Ass'n. of Commc'ns Enters. v. FCC*, 235 F.3d 662, 668 (D.C. Cir.), amended by *Ass'n. of Commc'ns Enters. v. FCC* (D.C. Cir. Jan. 18, 2001) ("*ASCENT*"), and the *CAF Order* at ¶ 1388 quoting *Ascent*, the AT&T ILECs rely on the placement of IP-TDM conversion equipment in the AT&T Corp. affiliate as a basis to refuse interconnection and the exchange of traffic in IP format under 251(c). *See* Direct testimony of Carl C. Albright, Jr. on behalf of AT&T Illinois, ICC Docket No. 12-0550 at 8, line 203, through 11, line 264 and Schedule CCA-1 depiction of integrated AT&T ILEC / AT&T Corp. IP network.

[4] *See, e.g.,* Investigation by the Department on its Own Motion to Determine whether an Agreement entered into by Verizon New England Inc., d/b/a Verizon Massachusetts is an Interconnection Agreement under 47 U.S.C. § 251 Requiring the Agreement to be filed with the Department for Approval in Accordance with 47 U.S.C. § 252, Mass. Dep't. of Telecom and Cable, 13-6, at 9, (May 13, 2013) ("*Mass. D.T.C. Verizon Investigation*") ("Verizon MA does not dispute that it has entered into . . . an agreement for the exchange of VoIP traffic in IP format.").

[5] See Reply Comments of XO Communications, LLC, GN Docket No. 12-353, at 7-8 (filed Feb. 25, 2013).

A. Carriers Know How to Interconnect Voice Traffic Using IP

Sprint currently has IP interconnection agreements with 12 major carriers, and Sprint currently exchanges tens of billions of minutes of voice traffic in IP format annually. As the Commission noted in the request for comment on the trials, CLECs and cable companies have been at the forefront of IP interconnection.[6] The major ILECs also know how to convert and exchange traffic in IP format as they do it routinely with their own affiliates to serve their own retail customers. Sprint has found few obstacles to IP interconnection when both parties act in good faith for mutual benefit. Delaying widespread IP interconnection in favor of a trial period merely countenances the efforts of the ILECs to wield their interconnection market power and delay the inevitable transition.

B. Voice Traffic Interconnection in IP format Must Include ILEC Affiliates

The major ILECs have thus far avoided their interconnection obligations by housing their IP operations outside their regulated ILEC companies and even by denying that Sections 251 and 252 govern IP-based voice service interconnection at all. Regardless of whether an ILEC has a retail VoIP offering, but hides the necessary IP interconnection functions and assets in a non-ILEC affiliate or an ILEC places both the retail VoIP offering and the IP interconnection functions and assets in a non-ILEC affiliate, the ILEC is subject to Sections 251 and 252.[7] This "hide the ball" approach employed by the ILECs to escape pro-competitive interconnection obligations should not be condoned. Any trials must include these affiliates, and the Commission must make

[6] *See* Technology Transitions Policy Task Force Seeks Comment on Potential Trials, Public Notice, DA 13-1016, GN Docket No. 13-5, at 4, n. 18 (May 10, 2013) ("Public Notice").

[7] *See Ass'n. of Commc'ns Enters. v. FCC*, 235 F.3d 662, 668 (D.C. Cir.), amended by *Ass'n of Commc'ns Enters. v. FCC* (D.C. Cir. Jan. 18, 2001).

clear that the ILECs' voice traffic and that of their affiliates are subject to just, reasonable, and non-discriminatory interconnection standards regardless of the corporate legal entity the ILEC assigns to handle the traffic.

It has been 18 months since the Commission stated that "section 251 of the Act is one of the key provisions specifying interconnection requirements, and that its interconnection requirements are technology neutral—they do not vary based on whether one or both of the interconnecting providers is using TDM, IP, or another technology in their underlying networks."[8] Despite this forward-looking language and its unambiguous mandate, little has changed in the real world. The fact that Sprint has yet to obtain IP-to-IP interconnection for voice traffic from any of the major ILECs is evidence of their unwillingness to comply with their obligations under the Act.

Verizon has argued that its ILEC entities operating in each state do not provide VoIP services, and, therefore, cannot interconnect with other carriers in IP format. AT&T does not deny that its ILEC U-Verse customers are IP customers, but claims that its Illinois ILEC—AT&T Illinois Inc.—does not have an IP network with which Sprint can interconnect.[9] Verizon's FiOS Digital Voice service is offered by Verizon Online

[8] *ICC/USF Transformation Order and FNPRM*, para. 1342; *see also id.* paras. 1011, 1344 (imposing a "good faith" negotiation expectation for IP-to-IP interconnection requests for the exchange of voice traffic). The Commission further noted that it will be "monitoring marketplace developments" to inform its future actions. *See id.* para. 1011. The obstinacy that ILECs show through their unwillingness to interconnect is exactly the kind of market problem that the Commission should be on guard for.

[9] *See* Reply Comments of Sprint Nextel, GN Docket No. 12-353, at 2-3 (Filed Feb. 25, 2013) ("*Sprint TDM-to-IP Transition Reply Comments*"); *see* footnote 3, *supra*. Arguably AT&T Illinois' internal use of AT&T Corp.'s IP/TDM conversion functionality to serve AT&T ILEC customers, but refusal to use that same functionality to exchange traffic in IP format with third parties violates 47 U.S.C. § 202. *See* 47 U.S.C. § 202 ("It shall be unlawful for any common carrier to make any unjust or unreasonable discrimination in charges, practices, classifications, regulations, facilities, or services for or in connection with like communication service, directly or indirectly, by any means or device, or to make or give any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to any particular person, class of persons, or locality, or to subject any particular person, class of persons, or locality to any undue or unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage.").

LLC, rather than Verizon's ILEC companies.[10]

Verizon has gone so far as to deny that Sections 251 and 252 apply to IP interconnection at all. Verizon told the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable that "the FCC has never concluded that Section 251(c) … applies to IP voice interconnection agreements."[11] Verizon is confusing the settled issue that it is obligated to negotiate interconnection arrangements in good faith and exchange voice traffic in IP format under 251 with the unsettled details of how specifically the interconnecting parties will implement the required traffic exchange. Verizon has previously told the Commission that "Verizon currently has one agreement in place covering its FiOS Digital Voice VoIP traffic, and we are negotiating others."[12] Nevertheless, Verizon has not filed that agreement as an interconnection agreement under 47 U.S.C. § 252. Verizon continues to ignore the Commission's explicit statement that "Section 251 is … technologically neutral."[13]

The Commission has already stated that carriers must negotiate in good faith. Unfortunately, that does not appear to be happening. The lack of agreement certainly is not a result of lack of effort on Sprint's part.[14] ILECs, however, have no incentive to

[10] Verizon Online Terms of Service, http://my.verizon.com/central/vzc.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=vzc_help_policies&id=TOS

[11] Verizon Motion to Dismiss, Mass. D.T.C. No. 13-2, para. 3 (Feb. 14, 2013).

[12] Comments of Verizon, WC Docket 10-90, at 14 (Filed Feb. 24, 2012).

[13] *ICC/USF Transformation Order and FNPRM*, para. 1342.

[14] Sprint has initiated arbitration proceedings in Illinois against AT&T. Sprint Petition for Arbitration pursuant to Section 252(b) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to Establish an Interconnection Agreement with Illinois Bell Telephone Company, ICC Docket No. 12-0550. Sprint has also engaged in discussions with AT&T in Michigan. Similarly, Sprint has intervened in Massachusetts seeking information about Verizon's voice IP interconnection agreement that Verizon has refused to file under Section 47 U.S.C. § 252. *See Mass. D.T.C. Verizon Investigation*, *supra* note 4. Finally, Sprint has engaged in numerous and ultimately fruitless talks with Verizon and AT&T; based on comments other

reach agreement as IP interconnection will inevitably undercut their highly profitable legacy TDM interconnection-related revenue streams and relieve the inordinate costs the ILECs impose on their competitors forced to use TDM-based interconnection.

C. Remaining Issues Can Be Worked Out Among Carriers and Should Be Governed by the Principle of Non-Discrimination

Technical issues that will accompany the TDM-to-IP migration will best be worked out cooperatively among the carriers, and non-technical issues should be governed by the principle of non-discrimination. IP technology is evolving so rapidly that any Commission attempt to draft comprehensive IP interconnection rules and standards will be obsolete before they are implemented. Sprint has found that it can resolve technical issues amicably when interconnecting with other carriers that are mindful of their good-faith responsibility to do so, or with carriers who recognize the tremendous benefits of all-IP networks. So long as the Commission and the state commissions provide an effective backstop to counter attempts by RBOCs to avoid their interconnection obligations, Sprint is confident, based on past experience, that network personnel are best equipped to determine between themselves how best to serve their customers through IP interconnection.[15]

Likewise, issues surrounding interconnection with smaller carriers still operating under TDM, but who subtend tandem switches operated by carriers who have switched to IP interconnection, can be addressed through the principle of non-discrimination. Many

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ILECs have filed in proceedings before the FCC, it would appear pointless to also attempt to engage them in similar discussions prior to the FCC reaffirming their obligation to negotiate.

[15] If the Commission does undertake the process of detailing precise technical interconnection standards, Sprint intends to be included in that process. However, as discussed above, Sprint does not think that such technical standards are necessary as Sprint has had little difficulty working out the technical details in voluntary agreements.

of the savings associated with IP interconnection would be undermined if the originating carrier had to determine whether the terminating carrier was connected to a transit provider via TDM or IP. The simple solution is nondiscrimination. If the transit provider has the ability to accept IP format traffic from its own affiliates or utilizes an affiliate to implement such ability, it must do so as well with unaffiliated carriers. Such a system resolves uncertainty and minimizes costs and delay in the transition to IP interconnection.

D. Voice Traffic Interconnection Points Should Be Based on Current Data POIs

The legacy PSTN based on TDM architecture imposes high interconnection costs on competitors due to its state-by-state, office-by-office approach to interconnection and the accompanying, inflated interconnection facilities and traffic exchange fees imposed by ILECs. The IP data networks have not taken this approach. Although Sprint recognizes that the exchange of voice traffic—even in IP format—imposes different considerations than the exchange of IP data, the overarching priority should be maximizing network efficiencies and minimizing interconnection costs that carriers must pass on to their customers.

Without Commission intervention, one major point of dispute between ILECs and other carriers will be the location and number of interconnection points. Sprint's approach here is consistent with the statutory framework under Section 251(c)(2)(B) mandating interconnection at "any technically feasible point within the carrier's network." Sprint has previously told the Commission that the most economical way to exchange voice IP traffic is to match the regional locations used in existing IP peering arrangements that have proven to be successful for the exchange of other IP traffic.[16] It is

[16] *See* Comments of Sprint Nextel Corporation, WC Docket No. 10-90, at 16-23 (Filed Feb. 24, 2012).

senseless and extraordinarily costly to retain the current structure of interconnecting in dozens or hundreds of end offices and tandems within a single state. This is in stark contrast to the cost-savings inherent in interconnecting at a single location in each state, or even more efficiently, at the same handful of locations nationwide where carriers already exchange IP data traffic.[17] It should be the responsibility of each carrier to get its traffic to the regional interconnection points rather than transporting the traffic deep into the ILEC's legacy networks as is typically done with TDM traffic, which imposes unnecessary costs in an IP world. The existing IP data networks do not attempt to conform to state or LATA boundaries and neither should the location of the voice interconnection points.

III. THE COMMISSION SHOULD COMPLETE THE FNPRM AND ISSUE AN ORDER CONFIRMING STATUTORY INTERCONNECTION OBLIGATIONS

Sprint pointed out in comments filed in February that it has yet to interconnect with AT&T or Verizon for the exchange of voice traffic in IP format.[18] The situation has not changed in the last five months. Sprint continues to try—fruitlessly—to interconnect with the major ILECs without success due to the uncompromising insistence by these carriers that they have no obligation to exchange voice traffic in IP format under the Act, either because they claim not to have an IP network independent of an affiliate's IP network or because they claim to be beyond the duties in Sections 251 and 252 entirely.

[17] Utilizing the same location to exchange voice traffic in IP format as carriers use to exchange data traffic does not mean the voice traffic will be comingled with data traffic or that the traffic is carried over the Internet.

[18] *Sprint TDM-to-IP Transition Reply Comments*, at 2 n.2 (filed Feb. 25, 2013).

The Commission should reaffirm that all Section 251 and 252 obligations extend to the exchange of traffic in IP format, *i.e.*, IP interconnection. This order should be supported by an instruction giving carriers who cannot voluntarily negotiate an agreement the full panoply of options under Title 47, including Section 252(b) arbitrations and 252(i) adoptions, as well as complaints with the Commission for violation of orders that all carriers negotiate in good-faith. Despite claims by some carriers that they have no Section 251 and 252 obligations to interconnect their ILEC affiliates with other carriers to exchange voice traffic in IP format—let alone their non-ILEC affiliates—the Commission also has authority to mandate such interconnection by all carriers under Section 706, which states that the FCC "shall encourage the deployment on a reasonable and timely basis of advanced telecommunications capability to all Americans … utilizing … measures that promote competition."[19] Furthermore, the Commission has its Title I ancillary authority to ensure that carriers reluctant to interconnect voluntarily do not skirt their obligations through corporate formalities.[20]

An important principle undergirding the Commission's action should be non-discrimination. The major ILECs already exchange voice traffic in IP format when it suits their interests, but refuse to do so when there is no financial advantage. The ILEC's discriminatory measures destroy the competitive framework that has driven growth in the industry since the passage of the 1996 Act.

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[19] 47 U.S.C. § 1302(a).

[20] The Commission has ancillary authority where "(1) the Commission's general jurisdictional grant under Title I covers the subject of the regulations and (2) the regulations are reasonably ancillary to the Commission's effective performance of its statutorily mandated responsibilities." *Am. Library Ass'n. v. FCC*, 406 F.3d 689, 700 (D.C. Cir. 2005). Here, the interconnection requirements fall within the Commission's Title I jurisdictional grant, as they are interstate communications by wire. IP interconnection requirements are reasonably ancillary to the effective performance of statutorily-mandated responsibilities in that a lack of reasonable interconnection agreements allows ILECs to skirt their common carrier obligations in Section 202 through corporate subsidiaries.

IV. THE COMMISSION SHOULD NOT DELAY VOICE INTERCONNECTION WHILE CARRIERS DEPLOY FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES

In the near future, the Commission must facilitate interconnection that supports technologies and services at the application layer. Sprint acknowledges that the issues surrounding the transmission of non-voice media, such as text or video, involve different considerations than the simple exchange of voice traffic. Although Sprint is hopeful that the Commission and the industry can make progress on implementing IP interconnection of those media based on the comments already solicited as part of the Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Connect America docket, doing so should not delay the pressing need to exchange billions of minutes of voice traffic that today are forced to legacy TDM interconnection networks.

Failure to implement IP interconnection under the basic competitive principles of the Act is imposing unnecessary costs and impediments to network improvements that ultimately increase costs to the industry and its consumers, undermine competition, and hinder the Commission's goals of advancing broadband IP networks and services. As such, the Commission should not conduct IP interconnection trials, but instead should require ILECs to exchange voice traffic in IP format on just and reasonable terms.

V. KEY ISSUES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BEFORE THE COMMISSION MOVES FORWARD WITH FACILITATING NG911 TRIALS

The Commission also seeks comment "on a possible trial that would deploy an "all-IP" NG911 service on an accelerated basis in a number of geographic areas where public safety authorities are ready to deploy NG911 for one or more PSAPs."[21] While

[21] Public Notice at 7.

Sprint does not oppose trials of new NG911 technology, there are a number of key issues that must be addressed and considered by the Commission prior to moving forward with trials related to NG911 service. Specifically, NG911 standards should be finalized, funding issues should be examined, other trial scenarios should be considered, and the Commission should also consider participation by all carriers with varying capabilities. Once these issues are addressed, NG911 trials could be a valuable tool to assist the Commission and the industry in gathering real-world operational data regarding NG911.

A. NG911 Trials Should Not Commence Until Standards Work Is Completed

While Sprint recognizes that important data could be gathered during NG911 trials, the Commission should not proceed with NG911 trials until standards work is closer to being finalized. The National Emergency Number Association ("NENA") i3 standard is still in the process of being finalized. Standards work by the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions ("ATIS") is also still underway. Conducting trials before standards work is finalized, or at least closer to completion, could result in inconsistencies that could undermine the utility of the data gathered. In addition, resources spent on trials conducted prior to standards being finalized could ultimately be wasted when further development is needed later to comport with standards. Waiting until standards are finalized will help to ensure the data obtained from trials is based on the same standards that will apply to the NG911 network when it is eventually deployed.

The FCC should consult with appropriate standards groups on an ongoing basis to identify what standards are complete and incomplete when developing specific trial goals and scenarios. Different standards will be applicable to different trial scenarios. For example, a voice-only trial would not need to incorporate standard specifications for non-voice 911 capabilities.

B. Important Funding Issues Should Be Evaluated Prior to Moving Forward with NG911 Trials

The Commission should evaluate issues related to funding NG911 deployment and should consider whether funding should also extend to infrastructure deployed for trial purposes. Existing 911 funding models associated with E9-1-1 deployment have proven to be flawed and have, in many cases, proven inadequate. Based on information available to date, it is unclear how NG911 funding will be structured. The Commission should examine this significant aspect of NG911 deployment and provide guidance prior to moving forward with NG911 trials. For the services and capabilities not covered by standards, but for which standards are later developed, the Commission should consider how carriers would be reimbursed for upgrading from the technology deployed for trial purposes to the new required standards.

C. The Commission Should Also Consider Other Trial Scenarios

As the Commission examines the need for NG911 trials, the Commission should consider the need to facilitate multiple trials based on different scenarios that could be used to assess transition issues associated with NG911 deployment. For example, the Commission should consider facilitating separate trials focusing on specific media or NG911 service capabilities including voice, video, text, and instant messaging. In addition, a trial where both text-to-911 and NG911 text messaging is deployed could be useful. It is likely carriers will still be supporting an interim SMS-based text-to-911 offering while also transitioning to NG911. The coexistence of these two systems should be evaluated. A trial for over-the-top ("OTT") service providers transitioning to NG911 could aid in evaluating the readiness of OTT providers to transition to NG911.

Trials in areas which have mixed capability support, for example a community where one public safety answering point ("PSAP") supports NG911 and others nearby only support legacy capabilities, would also assist with evaluating possible transition issues. It is important to understand how such a mixed environment will impact the user experience and behavior. In addition, it is important to assess how such a mixed environment will impact carrier costs.

D. The Commission Should Consider Making Trial Participation Available to All Interested Carriers

When considering trial participation by carriers, the Commission should consider participation by interested carriers with varying capabilities for delivering calls to a NG911 platform. The Commission should make trials available for carrier participation without building technological barriers such as a requirement that a carrier use an all IP-based technology. Dual-mode or hybrid TDM/IP selective routers would allow for more wide-scale carrier participation in the near-term.

E. Well-Planned Trials Could Be a Useful Tool in Identifying and Addressing Eventual Wide Scale NG911 Deployment

The Commission has identified a number of questions that could be addressed through an NG911 trial and also seeks comment "on the technical and process issues that should be covered by a trial and on how best to structure a trial to gather data on these issues."[22] The questions identified by the Commission could be addressed during the course of an informed NG911 trial. In addition to the questions the Commission has identified, there are other important aspects of NG911 deployment that could be assessed by trials. For example, from a technical standpoint a trial may help carriers determine the

[22] *Id.*

number of circuits or how much capacity will be needed by carriers to connect to regional Emergency Services IP Networks ("ESInets"). Trials may also help determine the appropriate "point of demarcation" that will be associated with the new NG911 architecture.[23]

In addition, one of the objectives of NG911 trials should be to identify potential cost-efficiency improvements that can be made relative to current 911 call-delivery architecture. The NG911 system architecture should allow for consolidation of facilities since it will likely be based on a system of regional ESInets, rather than individual Public Safety Answering Points. This aspect of the NG911 network should be studied as part of future NG911 trials.

From a process standpoint, a trial may help in examining how NG911 and the new media types associated with NG911 will be integrated into PSAP and public safety processes. Once new media types are being forwarded, individual call takers will need to be able to handle input from numerous sources and will need to be prepared to direct the information they receive to the other public safety agents who will need to be involved with addressing the emergency.

VI. CONCLUSION

IP interconnection trials are unnecessary and the Commission should reject any proposals to move ahead with such trials. Instead, the Commission should complete the pending rulemaking on intercarrier compensation and immediately mandate a transition

[23] Under the existing E9-1-1 model, the demarcation point for allocating responsibilities and costs between wireless carriers and PSAPs is the input to the 911 Selective Router. *See* Letter from Thomas J. Sugrue, Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, to Marlys R. Davis, E911 Program Manager, Department of Information and Administrative Services, King County, Washington (May 7, 2001). Similarly, the Commission will need to provide guidance on the appropriate "point of demarcation" for the new NG911 architecture and trials may prove invaluable in helping make that determination.

to the exchange of voice traffic in IP format. In addition, a number of important unresolved issues should be resolved before the Commission addresses proposals to hold trials for NG911.

Respectfully submitted,

SPRINT NEXTEL CORPORATION

/s Keith C. Buell

Charles W. McKee
Vice President, Government Affairs
Federal and State Regulatory

Keith C. Buell
Senior Counsel, Government Affairs
Federal Regulatory

Ray M. Rothermel Jr.
Counsel, Government Affairs
Federal Regulatory

900 Seventh St. NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
(703) 592-2560

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